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BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution,

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MOTH BEAN (*Phaseolus aconitifolius*).

The moth bean is a native of India, where it is said to be grown on the poorest land that will yield any crop. It is a leguminous plant and becomes inoculated very readily. It is characterized by a spreading habit of growth and by having its leaflets divided into three to five narrow segments. Owing to its abundance of fine stems and leaves it makes a hay of excellent quality and is eaten by farm animals as greedily as alfalfa. The moth bean compares favorably with cowpeas in yield and is probably somewhat more resistant to drought. It is therefore of considerable promise throughout the semiarid Southwest. It will make a hay crop as quickly as cowpeas, but requires a long season to produce seed.

Cultural directions.—The methods employed in growing cowpeas will be found most satisfactory for the moth bean. The crop should be planted in rows from 2½ to 3 feet apart, with plants every 2 to 3 inches. This requires from 5 to 6 pounds of seed per acre. Owing to the thick mat of vines produced, the crop can easily be harvested with a mower by setting the cutter bar low. At least two cultivations should be given and the surface soil left as smooth as possible, so as to facilitate harvesting. The crop should not be harvested until it has made its maximum growth. The mass of green forage can best be cured in windrows and later hauled and stored without putting into cocks.

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